

One Man/One Vote



One Man One Vote flag

Loan from Elisabeth Williams-Omilami

Almost one hundred years after the Fifteenth Amendment gave them the right to vote, African Americans were still blocked from the polls in many states. In the South poll taxes, literacy tests, complicated voter registration rules, intimidation, and violence made it impossible for blacks to vote. Voting rights demonstrations were viewed as a threat to the entrenched white power structure and culture of racial segregation.

In 1962 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began conducting voter education and registration drives in Mississippi using the slogan, "One Man, One Vote."



Voting rights demonstration in McComb, Mississippi, 1962

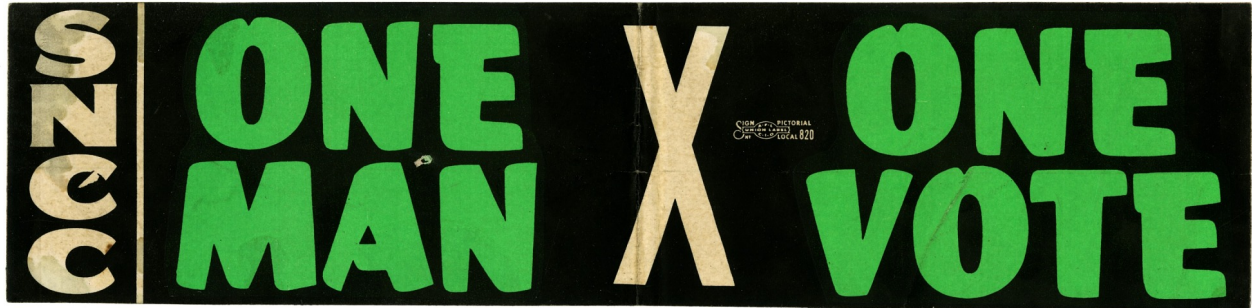
Courtesy of McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi



Button, One Man One Vote

Gift of Rita Jaros in memory of Harold and Dorothy Zuckerman

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Bumper sticker, One Man One Vote

Gift of Rita Jaros in memory of Harold and Dorothy Zuckerman

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The Selma March

In 1965, after a demonstration in Alabama erupted in violence and death, African American residents planned a march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery.

The Reverend Hosea Williams, a leader of the march, had his overcoat torn when Alabama state troopers attacked the marchers. His wife, Juanita, wore down her shoes on the fifty-four-mile walk



Juanita Williams's Shoes

Loan from Elisabeth Williams-Omilami

Hosea Williams's overcoat
Loan from Elizabeth Williams-Omilami

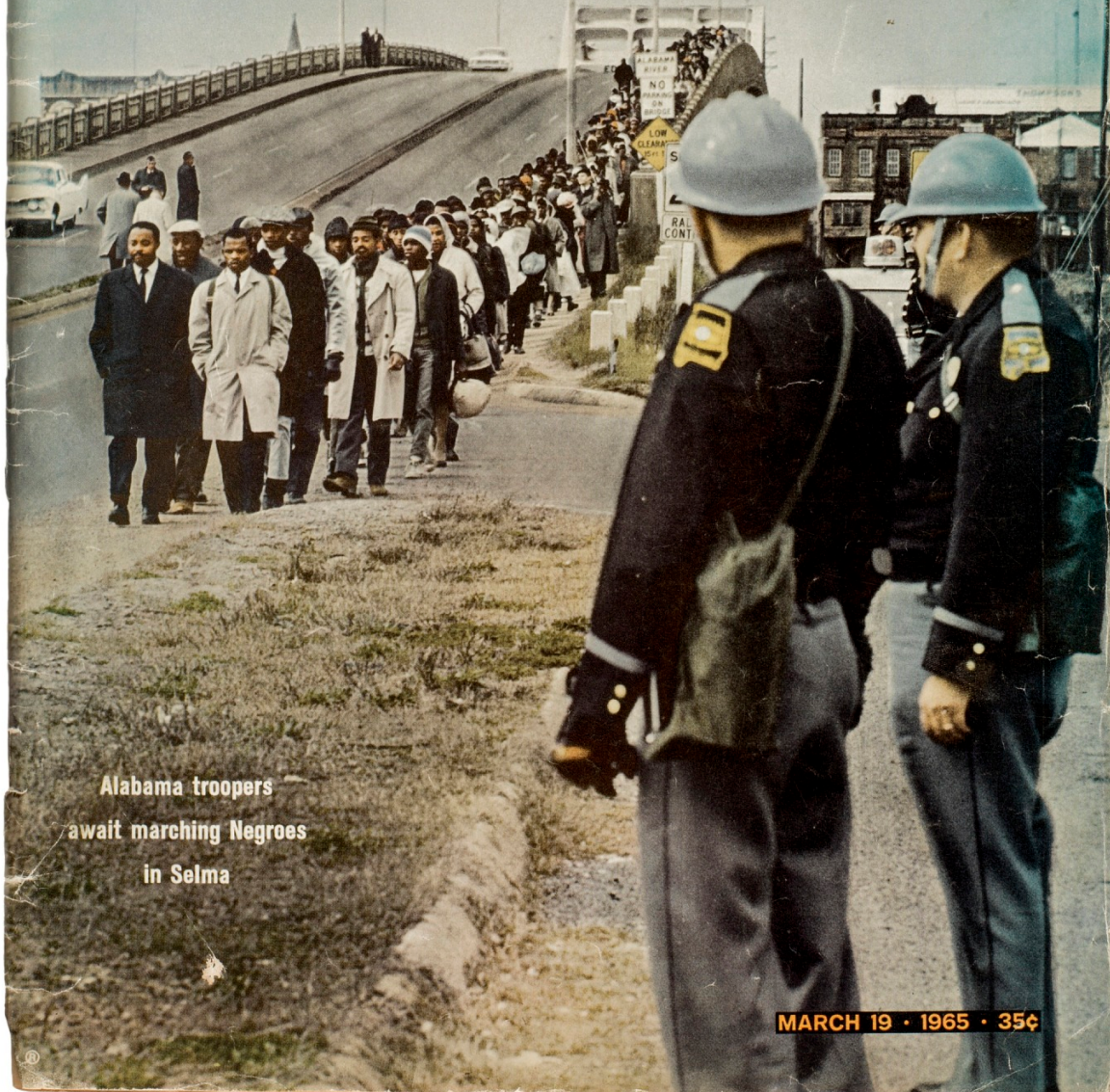
Bloody Sunday

Millions of Americans were horrified by images of the peaceful marchers led by the Reverend Hosea Williams and John Lewis being beaten by police while white onlookers cheered. From across the nation volunteers came to join the march. Others sent letters and telegrams to Washington demanding reform.

LIFE

Civil rights face-off
at Selma

THE SAVAGE SEASON BEGINS



Alabama troopers
await marching Negroes
in Selma

MARCH 19 • 1965 • 35¢

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"Selma: Beatings Start the Savage Season," *Life* magazine, March 19, 1965

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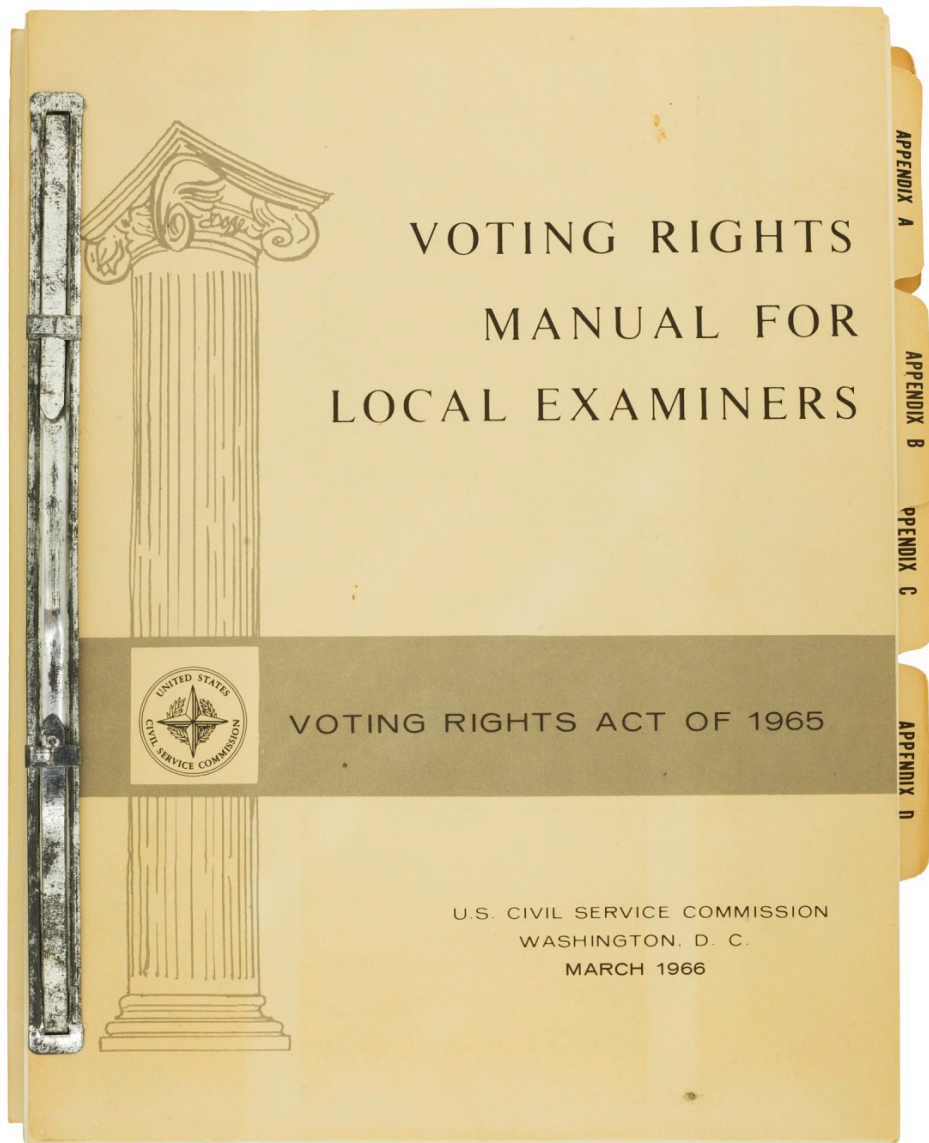
Voting Rights Act

Four months after the public outcry over the brutality in Selma, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965.

President Lyndon Johnson singing the Voting Rights Act
Courtesy of LBJ Library, photo of Robert Knudsen

New Opportunity

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 sent federal examiners to the South to enroll voters and supervise registration and voting in areas with a history of abuse. The act struck down restrictive state laws that created racial barriers to voting. In 1975 the act was amended to include four “language minorities”—American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Spanish-heritage citizens.



Voting rights manual, 1966

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Hours & Admission

Open every day, except December 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Admission is free and no tickets are required.

Location & Contact

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Washington, DC 20560 <<https://www.google.com/maps/place/smithsonian+national+museum+of+american+history/@38.8912835,-77.0322449,17z>>

Contact Information </about/contact>

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